

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release
December 8, 2005

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Project Safe Neighborhoods: Springfield Man Convicted for Armed Robbery of National City Bank

Springfield, IL- The United States Attorney for the Central District of Illinois, Rodger A. Heaton, announced that a jury has convicted Shawn William Bland, age 24, of 1523 East Jackson Street, Springfield, Illinois, for the March 24, 2005 armed robbery of a Springfield branch of National City Bank, located at 802 South 11th Street. The jury also found Bland guilty of carrying and using a firearm during a crime of violence. The jury deliberated approximately 2½ hours before returning the verdicts late yesterday afternoon, December 7, 2005.

U.S. District Judge Jeanne E. Scott scheduled sentencing for April 7, 2006, at 3:30 p.m. and remanded Bland to the custody of the U.S. Marshals Service.

At sentencing, Bland faces up to 25 years in prison for the armed bank robbery. The penalty for using a firearm during a crime of violence is a minimum seven years imprisonment which must be served consecutive to any other sentence imposed for the robbery.

Evidence presented by the government since the trial began on Monday, December 5, 2005, showed that Bland entered the bank on March 24, 2005, pointed a handgun at bank employees, and took approximately \$4,575. At the time of the robbery, Bland was on parole from the Illinois Department of Corrections for armed robbery and had been released from prison in September 2004.

The investigation was conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Springfield Police Department, and the Illinois State Police; the case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Gregory K. Harris and Patrick J. Chesley as part of Project Safe Neighborhoods.

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